



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

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Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 273-6000
www.va.gov

Fact Sheet

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Facts about VA's National Cemeteries

National cemeteries are national shrines in communities where deceased veterans receive perpetual care to commemorate their service as members of the U.S. armed forces. Most men and women who have served in the military are eligible for burial in a national cemetery, as are their dependent children and usually their spouses. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) manages the country's network of national cemeteries through its National Cemetery Administration.

Statistics

- VA maintains more than 2.6 million gravesites at 120 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico, as well as in 33 soldier's lots and monument sites. Occupied gravesites may hold the remains of more than one family member.
- Since 1973, annual interments in VA national cemeteries have increased from 36,400 to 93,000 in fiscal year 2004. Interments are expected to increase annually until 2008.
- The nation's most famous national cemetery – Arlington National Cemetery – is one of the few not run by VA. It is administered by the Army.
- More than 300,000 full-casket gravesites, 65,000 in-ground gravesites for cremated remains and more than 35,000 columbarium niches are available in already-developed areas of VA national cemeteries.
- There are approximately 14,200 acres within established national cemeteries. Just over half are undeveloped and -- along with available gravesites in developed acreage -- have the potential to provide more than 3.6 million gravesites.
- Of the 120 national cemeteries, 60 are open to all interments; 22 can accommodate cremated remains and family members of those already interred; and 38 are closed to new interments but accommodate family members in already occupied gravesites.

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- Of the more than 93,000 interments conducted in FY 2004, 73 percent were in the 20 busiest national cemeteries: Riverside, Calif.; Calverton, N.Y.; Florida, in Bushnell; Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis; Fort Snelling in Minneapolis; Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas; Willamette in Portland, Ore.; Fort Logan in Denver; National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona in Phoenix; Fort Rosecrans in San Diego; Houston; Dallas-Fort Worth; Tahoma in Kent, Wash.; San Joaquin Valley in Gustine, Calif.; Massachusetts in Bourne; Abraham Lincoln in Elmwood, Ill.; Indiantown Gap in Annville, Pa.; Long Island, N.Y.; Puerto Rico in Bayamon; and Ohio Western Reserve in Rittman.
- As of Sept. 30, 2004, eight national cemeteries each contained more than 100,000 occupied gravesites, collectively accounting for 43 percent of all gravesites maintained: Long Island, N.Y.; Calverton, N.Y.; Fort Snelling In Minneapolis; Riverside, Calif.; Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis; Golden Gate in San Bruno, Calif.; Willamette in Portland, Ore.; and Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas.
- Largest national cemetery: Calverton, N.Y., 1,045 acres.
Smallest national cemetery: Hampton (Va.) at the VA Medical Center, 0.03 acres.
Oldest national cemeteries: 14 established in 1862 (12 currently maintained by VA).
Newest national cemetery: Fort Sill in Elgin, Okla., opened in November 2001.
- Since 1973, VA has provided nearly 8.8 million headstones and markers. In FY 2004, VA provided more than 349,000 headstones and markers.
- VA provided more than 435,000 Presidential Memorial Certificates to the loved ones of deceased veterans in FY 2004.
- Since 1980, the State Cemetery Grants Program has awarded or obligated more than \$215 million to 30 states and Guam for the establishment, expansion or improvement of 54 state veterans cemeteries. In FY 2004, VA-supported state cemeteries provided more than 19,000 interments.
- Volunteers donated more than 364,000 hours at VA national cemeteries during FY 2004.
- More than 8.7 million people visited VA national cemeteries in FY 2004.
- In 1999 and 2003, with the passage of two laws, Congress directed VA to establish 12 new national cemeteries. One has been opened in Oklahoma. The rest – one in Alabama, two in California, three in Florida, one in Georgia, one in Michigan, two in Pennsylvania and one in South Carolina – will be located where veteran populations of 170,000 or more reside within a 75-mile area unserved by a VA national cemetery.

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Veterans Statistics

Veterans' deaths are expected to peak at more than 676,000 in 2008. Based on census data, it is estimated that more than 662,000 veterans died in 2004. Historically, about 12 percent of U.S. veterans choose to be buried in VA national or state cemeteries. This percentage will increase with the opening of new national cemeteries.

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